



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Fact Sheet

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

Progress Made at the Phoenix VA Health Care System

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is making progress to ensure Veterans receive the care they need, when they need it, and where they want to be seen. While more work remains, VA has expanded access to care for Veterans in Phoenix and across the country, both in VA facilities and in their communities since May 2014.

Increasing Access to Care:

- From May to July 2014, VA reached out to more than 4,000 Veterans in Phoenix to coordinate the acceleration of their care, including all Veterans in Phoenix identified as being on unofficial lists by the Inspector General or the facility Electronic Waiting List.
- Between May 1, 2014, and March 31, 2015, Phoenix VA Health Care System (PVAHCS) issued over 38,000 authorizations for enrolled veterans to receive care in the community, an 87% increase over the same time period one year earlier.
- From May 1, 2014, to February 28, 2015, PVAHCS completed more than 530,000 Veteran appointments, a 19 percent increase in the number of completed appointments over the same time period in the previous year. As of January 31:
 - Primary care completed appointments increased by 9 percent over the same time period in the previous year.
 - Mental health completed appointments increased by 16 percent over the same time period in the previous year.
 - Specialty care completed appointments increased by 16 percent over the same time period in the previous year.
- The Phoenix VA Health Care System completed 95 percent of appointments from October 2014 to January 2015 within 30 days of the date the Veteran preferred.

Increasing Staffing Levels:

- As of April 2015, the Phoenix VA Health Care System has hired 406 net new employees continuing its progress toward the 800 positions needed over the next two years
 - Increased primary care staffing of physicians, nurses and clerks by 30 additional full-time employees

- Hired 165 new employees as a direct result of the Veterans Access Choice and Accountability Act (VACAA)

Improving the Veteran Experience in Phoenix:

- Opening new community based outpatient clinics in northeast and southwest Phoenix in 2015.
- Construction on a new emergency department expansion began in January 2015.
- Construction on a dental clinic is completing its design phase and expected to be complete within a year.
- Clinical expansion of Medical Surgery areas are currently in the design stage.
- Expanding the Homeless Community Referral and Resource Center by 5,000 additional square feet to serve more homeless Veterans.
- Construction began on a new parking structure in January with three parking leases in progress. Valet parking for Veterans began in November 2014.
- Restructuring phone systems and staffing levels to improve the patient call center.

Ensuring Accountability:

- In November 2014, the former Medical Center Director was terminated by VA. To ensure continuity of care for Veterans and leadership for VA employees, Glenn Grippen, retired Network Director, was appointed as interim Phoenix VA Healthcare System director.
- VA achieved certification from the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) under OSC's 2302(c) Whistleblower Protection Certification Program.
- VA coordinated with OSC to successfully resolve whistleblower retaliation complaints filed by three employees of the VA Phoenix Health Care System.
- Since June 2014, 91 percent of our medical facilities have new leaders or leadership teams. This includes both newly placed, permanent leaders and those acting in a detailed role.
- VA's Office of Accountability Review has an administrative investigation ongoing to assess leadership accountability for the issues identified in the final OIG report, for alleged whistleblower retaliation, and for other alleged leadership failures affecting the Phoenix VA Healthcare System.

April 2015